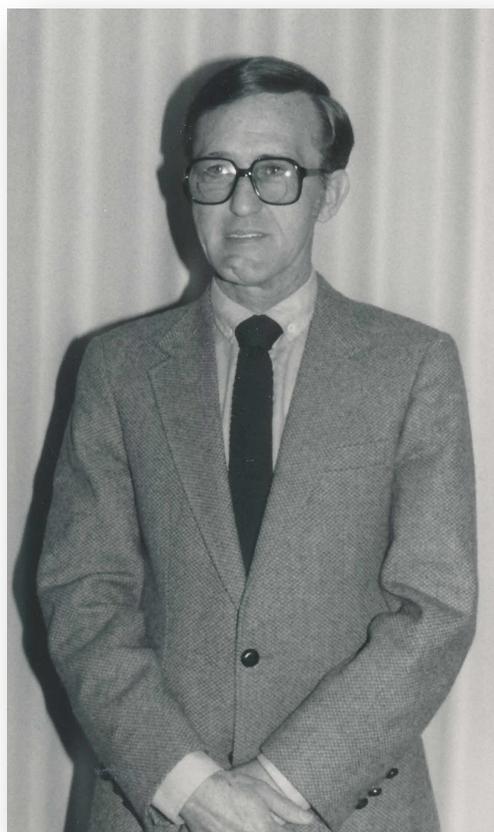


Lobbying the 1980 Utah State Legislature for a Building for the Community Center for the Deaf

In September 1979, the Utah State Board of Education reserved \$2.5 million out of \$15.1 million budget for building construction and remodeling for the center for the deaf. While the center was listed #1 on the building priority list, the board was in the process of preparing to present the request to the State Building Board and the 1980 Legislature (UAD Bulletin, September 1979).

However, during the legislative process in January 1980, the community center for the deaf was pushed down from its 6th place on the building appropriations list to 11th place by Governor Scott Matheson. The Utah Deaf community was in danger of losing the center. UAD President Mortensen urged them to contact their local legislators and members of the appropriations subcommittee to support the center. However, the center didn't make it to top priority (UAD Bulletin, January 1980).



**W. David Mortensen, president of the Utah Association for the Deaf
Photo by Robert L. Bonnell**

While work was still in the process of moving the center for the deaf to top priority, an architectural firm in Ogden submitted tentative drawings for the center for the deaf to the State Building Board in May 1980. It was estimated that it would cost \$3.4 million for the land and the building; and inflation would push the price up (UAD Bulletin, May 1980).

In late July 1980, the Social Services Committee met at the Capitol and added its support to the center for the deaf. Representative Charles Doane, R- Salt Lake City recommended that the funding of the center for the deaf be made a top priority item with the State Building Board and the Appropriations Committee. It passed with just one dissent. It was #1 on the Utah State Board of Education budget and it was planned to bring it up at the 1981 legislature in January (The UAD Bulletin, August 1980).

Utah Association for the Deaf urged the Utah Deaf community to contact their local legislators to support funding for the center for the deaf. They felt it was logical to set up a center in Salt Lake City where the majority of the deaf people lived. It was intended as a state-wide center in one location and those who lived outside of Salt Lake City would find it beneficial to take the time to go to Salt Lake City. UAD went the extra mile to get the community center for the deaf set up through legislative funding (UAD Bulletin, August 1980).

In September 1980, UAD President Mortensen informed the Utah Deaf community that the community center for the deaf was on the agenda for discussion this fall and the state committees were meeting to hear proposals. He again asked the Utah Deaf community to meet their local legislators and ask them to support funding for the center for the deaf. However, it came to his attention that a few deaf people were opposed to the center, but the reasons were hard to determine. It might be that these people wanted a clubhouse where they could have the freedom to set up a private membership club and have a bar. He assured them that the center for the deaf would have nearly everything that deaf people wanted, except liquor. The clubhouse would serve only a few needs, and not in any way begin to match the facilities and services of the center. He emphasized the importance of cooperating and working together as well as concentrating on one thing at a time, then go after other things they needed or wanted (UAD Bulletin, September 1980).

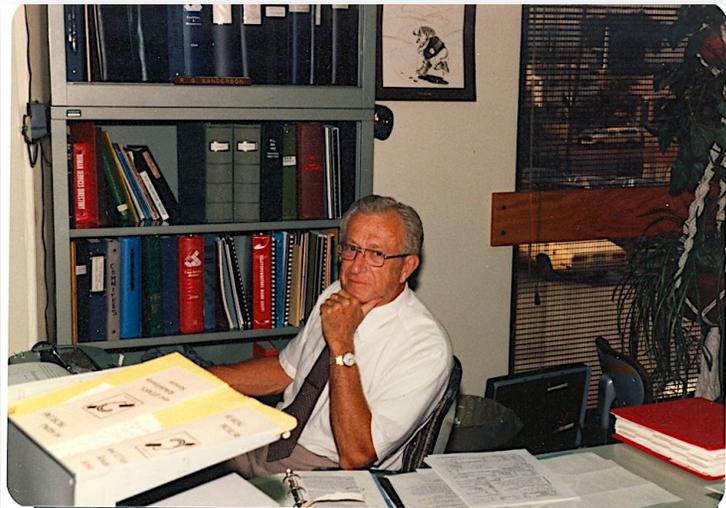
On October 11, 1980, the Utah Association for the Deaf invited several state legislators to meet with deaf people at the UAD October Funfest at the Utah School for the Deaf, Ogden (UAD Bulletin, October 1980).

In November 1980, UAD encouraged the Utah Deaf community not to vote for Initiatives A and B. That way, the center for the deaf would be sure to get enough tax money to fund projects. Otherwise, this would cut down on the tax dollars available for projects and for the center for the deaf (UAD Bulletin, November 1980).

In December 1980, deaf leaders continued to actively assist the Utah State Board of Education in its effort to secure funding through the legislature for the comprehensive community center for the deaf (UAD Bulletin, December 1980).

Unfortunately, in April 1981, the proposed community center for the deaf was not funded. Despite the

effort of UAD encouraging the Utah Deaf community to contact their local legislators in March 1981, not everyone did. With very little effort from the Deaf community, the Republican-dominated legislature put the need



Dr. Robert G. Sanderson working in his office

of a dairy barn at Utah State University ahead of the needs of the deaf citizens. The dairy barn bumped the community center down below the funding cut off line. The legislature even put the cows ahead of the need to purchase the Utah State Board of Education building before its option expired in December 1980. Dr. Walter D. Talbot, State Superintendent continued to work on behalf of the center and finally, a resolution was

passed at the July 1981 convention of the Utah Association for the Deaf! (UAD Bulletin, March 1981; UAD Bulletin, April 1981; Sanderson, 2004).

Dr. Robert G. Sanderson Appointed to Dr. Powrie V. Doctor Chair

At the same time in July 1981, Gallaudet University announced that Dr. Robert G. Sanderson, director of Services to the Deaf Office in Utah, had been appointed to fill the

Dr. Powrie V. Doctor Chair for the academic year 1981 – 1982. He was the fourth person to receive it (UAD Bulletin, July 1981; Sanderson, 2004).



Valerie G. Kinney, a board member of the Utah Association for the Deaf

Dr. Sanderson and his wife, Mary, left Utah on August 24 to take his job. He took an educational leave of absence from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation from that time on until the end of May. Mary also took a leave of absence from the US Forest Service for the same length of time (UAD Bulletin, July 1981).

Dr. Sanderson's project was doing research into the social rehabilitation of deaf people as differentiated from vocational rehabilitation. He taught one or two classes in counseling in addition to research and writing. Additionally, he did some traveling to gather data from other rehabilitation agencies. Dr. Sanderson and Mary returned to their respective jobs in June 1982 (UAD Bulletin, July 1981).

During Dr. Sanderson's absence from the state, UAD President Mortensen asked for a meeting with Governor Matheson, but the governor couldn't meet with him. Governor Matheson sent his aide, Tony Mitchell, and called in William Boren of the Division of Rehabilitation, to meet with Mortensen along with Valerie (Kinney) Platt,

UAD secretary and Alden Broomhead, an UAD board member. Their concerns were shared of several past failures of the legislature to pass funding for a community center for the deaf and the “cows before Deaf people rejection.” Mr. Mitchell, after talking about the failure of obtaining funds for a center for the deaf, told Mr. Boren to find \$500,000 from the Division of Rehabilitation budget and begin a search for a location (Sanderson, 2004).

Resignation of Dr. Walter D. Talbot Takes Utah Deaf community by Surprise

On January 15, 1982, Utah Association for the Deaf was taken by surprise to learn that Dr. Walter D. Talbot, superintendent of Utah public education, announced his resignation, effective June 30, at the Utah State Board of Education meeting (UAD Bulletin, February 1982).

Dr. Walter D. Talbot had long supported the Utah Deaf community in its endeavors, especially with the community center for the deaf (UAD Bulletin, February 1982).

Lobbying the 1982 Utah State Legislature for the Community Center for the Deaf

While many questions had come up, such as the naming of a director, setting up an administrative board, remodeling plans and the like, the UAD officers and member representatives wasted no time meeting with Dr. Walter Talbot to get the ball rolling (UAD Bulletin, March 1982).

Progress on Community Center for the Deaf

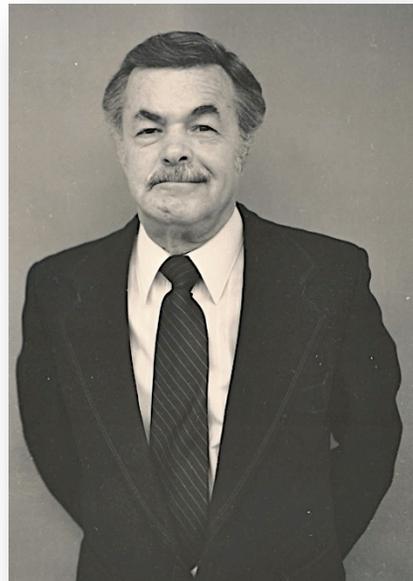
On January 14, 1982, the Public Education Appropriations Committee at the Capitol agreed to recommend a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints building be converted to a center for the deaf in Midvale. The purchase price was secured at

\$110,000 with \$30,000 more for remodeling. The State Building Board had an appraisal made of this used church building that was built in 1929. In the meantime, they were under the negotiation process with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on the final purchase price before presenting the proposal to a legislative committee during this legislative session (UAD Bulletin, February 1982).

Funding for the Center for the Deaf Approved

During the last days of the 1982 Utah Legislature, a bill outlining the funded projects under the State Building Board was passed, containing a line item for a center for the deaf in the amount of \$200,000. This was cause for rejoicing, since Utah Association for the Deaf had worked for the last several years to obtain funding for the center (UAD Bulletin, March 1982).

Utah Association for the Deaf had many questions such as naming of a director, setting up an administrative board, remodeling plans and the like, which were settled within a month. In the meantime, UAD officers and member representatives met with Dr. Walter Talbot, superintendent of public education, to get the ball rolling (UAD Bulletin, March 1982).



Pete Green, a member of the Center for the Deaf Committee

The Center for the Deaf was put on the agenda for the Utah State Board of Education meeting on March 19, 1982 and a list of deaf citizens was approved to form a committee to oversee the Center for the Deaf, which was to be located in a former Latter-day Saints Ward in Midvale. Advertising for the position of a director and a secretary for the Center began immediately (UAD Bulletin, April 1982).

The committee (deaf) members consisted of George Gavros, Peter Green, Dennis Platt, Fred Bass, Robert Welsh, Dora Laramie, Richard Snow, Janny Scheeline, William Sevy, Celia May Baldwin, Lynn Losee, and Dave Mortensen (UAD Bulletin, April 1982).

Search for a New Location

The next step was to search for a location. The original plan was to find a site in Midvale, but none of the sites were found satisfactory due to lack of parking. One was found in an old city dump! (Sanderson, 2004).



Dennis Platt, a member of the Center for the Deaf Committee

An old church belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was found in Midvale. Although the building was small and lacked a much-desired gymnasium, Dr. Sanderson, Gene Stewart, Beth Ann Stewart Campbell, Norman Williams, and Robert Lunnan all thought it would do for a start with a lot of remodeling. The \$200,000

appropriation from the 1982 Legislature resulted in the purchase and renovation began for a chapel to be used as a center for the deaf (Sanderson, 2004).

The Division of Facilities Construction and Management, the building manager for all state owned facilities, began planning with an architect and the deal was closed among Rehabilitation Services, Utah State Board of



Robert Welch, a member of the Center for the Deaf Committee The Utah Eagle, April 1955

Education, and Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Sanderson, 2004).

Before the construction and remodeling of the Midvale building began in October 1982, Dora Laramie, a teacher at the Utah School for the Deaf, and her husband, George, both long-time members of the Deaf community, met with Dr. Sanderson and told him about a large church in Bountiful that had been standing vacant for a while. They felt that because it had a gym and many meeting rooms, it would be much more suited to the needs of the Deaf community. It required very little fixing up to be ready for immediate occupancy (Sanderson, 2004).



Dora Laramie, a member of the Center for the Deaf Committee

After Dora and George Laramie brought the Bountiful church to Dr. Sanderson's attention, he discussed it with his boss, Dr. Harvey Hirschi, Acting Administrator of Rehabilitation Services. He was very supportive of this building and immediately requested a halt to the proceedings at the Midvale building. As word

spread, the Utah Deaf community and the Division of Rehabilitation Services expressed desire to change the location of the center from Midvale to Bountiful. State Superintendent Kim R. Burningham, who replaced Dr. Talbot, gave the Utah State Board of Education information that there had been a change of direction, and that the center would be in Bountiful, in a much finer and larger, vacant church, rather than in the Midvale building. The board approved the change (Sanderson, 2004).



George Laramie

Eventually, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints agreed to take the Midvale church building as a trade-in and sell the Bountiful church building. In sum, the total estimated purchase and renovation cost of the Midvale building was \$525,000. The total price of the Bountiful building, including purchase, renovation, real estate fee, and architect fee, was \$333,000! \$191,000 was saved while providing a more adequate building (Sanderson, 2004).

Deaf Dedicates ‘Home of Their Own’

After a long wait and much patience since the 1975 Feasibility Study for a Community Center for the Deaf, the Utah Community Center for the Deaf (UCCD) was officially opened at the Bountiful 33rd LDS Ward Chapel at 388 North 400 South in January 1983 (Sanderson, 2004). Dave Mortensen, president of the Utah Association for the Deaf and the state’s only deaf social worker for the deaf, said, “It was determined by the study that the deaf people of Utah had certain unique, well-defined needs” (The Salt Lake Tribune, May 29, 1983).

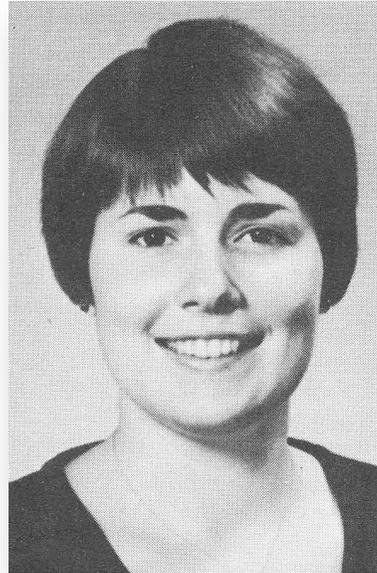


Lynn Losee, a member of the Center for the Deaf Committee

On June 9, 1983, members of the Utah Deaf community had a ribbon-cutting ceremony to dedicate the renovated UCCD a ‘home of their own’ after culminating years of frequently frustrating efforts to make their needs known to the legislature. At the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Dr. Sanderson and Mr. Mortensen felt the communication was the key. Dr. Sanderson explained that, “Deaf and hard of hearing people cannot be served effectively unless there is free and easy communication between them and the professionals and paraprofessionals who serve them.” He also said, “The mode of communication is left to the individual, and the helping professionals meet the desires expressed.” Mr. Mortensen stressed, “Deaf people need to have a place to go to where they know they will receive understanding and

assistance whenever they want or need it. They need to have confidence and trust in the people they go to for help, and this is something they cannot always get it at those places where the people, no matter how sincere they may be, cannot communicate effectively in the mode desired by the individual at the level of his language understanding” (The Salt Lake Tribune, May 29, 1983).

At this time, the UCCD was expected to serve appropriately 78,000 deaf and hard of hearing people in Utah – 10,000 of whom were estimated to be totally deaf for communication purposes (The Salt Lake Tribune, May 29, 1983). Additionally, it was UCCD’s goal to solve the problems experienced by the deaf, by the hard of hearing, and especially by the deaf with multi-disabilities, by providing facilities for social and recreational activities (The Salt Lake Tribune, May 29, 1983).



Celia May Baldwin, a member of the Center for the Deaf Committee UAD Bulletin, Fall 1969

Dr. Sanderson said, “It was a dream of many years come true with much appreciation to the Utah State Board of Education, Rehabilitation Services, and the Utah State Legislature” (Sanderson, 2004).

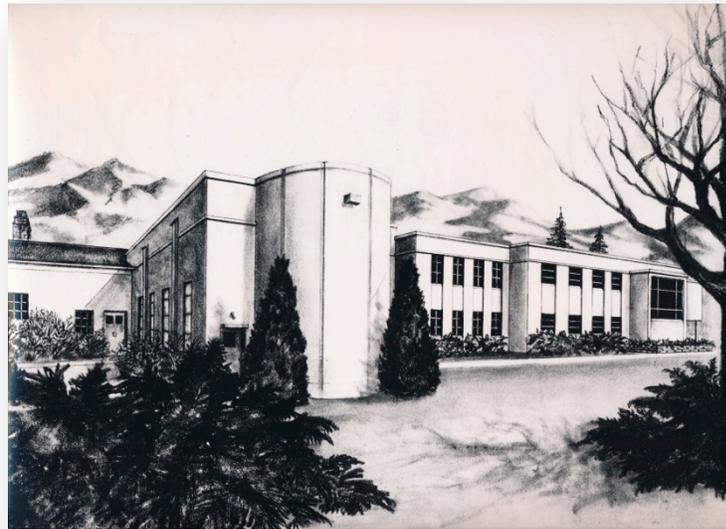
Home of the First Utah Community Center for the Deaf

A year before the Utah Community Center for the Deaf was officially opened in Bountiful, Dr. Sanderson was appointed as the first director of the Utah Community Center for the Deaf by Dr. Harvey Hirschi. Three staff members, Beth Ann Stewart Campbell, Norman Williams and Robert Lunnen were engaged in 1982 (UAD Bulletin, July 1982; Sanderson, 2004).

The UCCD provided a variety of services such as vocational rehabilitation services, counseling, interpreter services, telecommunications, information and referral, a library on deafness, training programs, volunteer services, peer support, and classes (Sanderson, 2004).

The UCCD collected the best books and research materials on deafness in the state, equipment, photos and printing laboratory for retraining displaced deaf workers (The Salt Lake Tribune, May 29, 1983). On December 5th, 1983, Robert Welsh, a deaf man with a successful color-separation and photography business, taught a class to help open up jobs for deaf people. His laboratory and furnishings were set up in one of the upper floor rooms (Sanderson, 2004).

In addition to providing rehabilitation services, adult education and retraining, the UCCD was the state hub for social activities (The Salt Lake Tribune, May 29, 1983). The 22,000 square foot community



Utah Community Center for the Deaf in Bountiful Utah, 1983
Pencil drawing by Robert Winkelkotter

center afforded a facility for physical recreation, socialization and activities. Parties were held. Basketball practice, archery practice, volleyball, and movies were also held. The kitchen was frequently used (Sanderson, 2004).

After improvements were completed, the office space was made available for the Utah Association for the Deaf as well as the various community organizations for the deaf and hard of hearing, including Self Help for the Hard of Hearing. They were finally able to store their materials and carry on activities of their organizations (Sanderson, 2004).

Deaf people from Ogden and Salt Lake areas pitched in to make the UCCD friendly, habitable and welcoming. They finally had a meeting place of their own and they no longer had to worry about arranging events elsewhere.

Dream Becomes a Nightmare

The Utah Community Center for the Deaf soon faced numerous obstacles. While Dr. Sanderson was working as the director, he noticed that there was a flood on the east side of the building from the sprinkler system at a neighbor's home. The parking became extremely crowded when gathering for parties or other events. The air conditioning on the upper floor was poor during the summer and an old coal-fired furnace caught on fire during the winter. Security became a problem when the building was broken into and some items stolen. All doors had to be re-keyed. Maintenance became very expensive

when a lot of repairs were needed. Commuting from a distance became a problem after the initial excitement slowly diminished (Sanderson, 2004).



Richard Snow, a member of the Center for the Deaf Committee

The Deaf community's dream became a disaster when melting snow created massive mudslides from the mountains and hit 400 North Street. The depth of the mudslide was about three feet. Along the street, the basement of several homes, lower than the level of the street, were filled to the brim with mud. Luckily, the mud missed the Utah Community Center

building because it was a bit higher on the south side of the street and had a four-foot retaining wall along the sidewalk. The mudslide of 1983 was called a "once in hundred year" event (Sanderson, 2004).

The Utah Community Center for the Deaf Officially Dedicated

After many months of planning by the Advisory Council for the Deaf the dedication became a reality. On November 5, 1983, the Utah Community Center for the Deaf was officially dedicated. Celia May Baldwin, dedication chairperson, reported approximately 325 people attended the gala event (UAD Bulletin, June 1983).

A group called Irregularities gave a hilarious performance of unusual and odd fashion showings, and donated the fee, which had been paid for their performance plus an additional sum of money. This donation was a surprise and Utah Association for the Deaf greatly appreciated their service and donation (UAD Bulletin, June 1983).

The Utah Community Center for the Deaf Continues to Operate

The next two years, many activities were held in the gym. Life continued on at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf. The Utah Association for the Deaf established its first formal office in the Center and hired Valerie Platt (later Kinney) as its business manager, on a part-time basis. This office was probably the first in the nation of any state association of the deaf (Sanderson, 2004).

Ms. Campbell was effective in getting sponsorships and donations from local service clubs to give the Utah Community Center of the Deaf needed supplies that could not be provided by the state (Sanderson, 2004).



Valerie G. Kinney, a business manager of the Utah Association for the Deaf at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf

Before the Sorenson Communication, Inc. came along, the Text Teletype, known as TTY, was widely used by the Deaf community. Conversations were typed rather than

spoken which allowed for direct communication with anyone who had a similar device. Robert Weitbrecht, a deaf physicist, invented the first TTY in 1964. At the UCCD, the TTY shop remained quite busy repairing old teleprinter machines for deaf consumers. When Sorenson Communications Inc. developed a videophone, it also provided a free video relay service provided by Sorenson Communications, Inc. The video relay service was launched in Salt Lake City in 2003 (Sanderson, 2004).

Robert Lunnen, a Navy veteran who repaired teleprinter machines for the military during World War II, developed a love for the old equipment that Western Union, AT&T Mountain States Telephone and other local businesses donated to the UCCD for people to use (Sanderson, 2004).

Norman Williams, a deaf man and a graduate of Utah School for the Deaf in 1962, was the other half of the team that kept the TTY machines working for the Deaf community. Not only that, he contributed many skills to the Center as a handyman; he was a talented craftsman, builder, electrician, tinkerer, and mechanic (Sanderson, 2004).

According to Dr. Sanderson, supporting this mission was probably one of the greatest accomplishments of Utah's Rehabilitation Services because it made communication possible for all deaf and hard of hearing people of the state. Prior to the invention of the TTY, rehabilitation counselors and social workers had few options for communication since they could not use the ordinary telephone with deaf people. A lot of the time, they would have to drive to wherever the consumers lived and hope to find them at home. The TTY made it easier for counselors to communicate with consumers (Sanderson, 2004).

Did You Know?

In 1984, under the administration of Beth Ann Stewart Campbell at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf in Bountiful, Norman Williams ordered the round tables table (in sections) for the conference room from the state penitentiary for \$2,000.00. He insisted that the deaf-friendly oval

and the round tables were the best choice, as they allowed the deaf and hard of hearing individuals to see each speaker (Norman Williams, personal communication, April 12, 2012). Dave Mortensen remembers Beth Ann bragging about her office and the table that the inmates of State Prison made, as well as the tables in the conference room (Dave Mortensen, personal communication, April 3, 2012).

Dr. Grant B. Bitter's Concerns with the Utah Community Center for the Deaf

While the Utah Community Center for the Deaf still utilized and operated its facility for both rehabilitation services and recreation services, on January 2, 1985, Dr. Grant B. Bitter, an ardent oral advocate, frowned upon services they provided. He criticized how the Utah Community Center for the Deaf offered recreation activities and how the UCCD counselors worked with the oral deaf population in the rehabilitation services, and its connection with the Utah Association for the Deaf. He wrote, as follows:

“No currently employed rehabilitation counselors for the deaf should be appointed as director for the Center for the Deaf...unless it is entirely separate from rehabilitation services; then the center should be supported by private funds and contributions as a “recreation center” for the Deaf community. Under those circumstances it should not be supported by public tax dollars. If the center is to be a place where all hearing impaired persons may go for appropriate services in meeting individual needs then it must be divested from any relationship to UAD, or any other organization of a special interest nature, and be entirely free from these groups to pressure special interest decisions or control.”



Dr. Grant B. Bitter
The Utah Eagle, 1967

Additionally, Dr. Bitter emphasized the importance to have the legitimate needs of the Utah Deaf community

considered and appropriate individual needs met as it would be with oral hearing impaired individuals. Moreover, he wrote in capital letters,

“NO PROGRAMS FROM ANY OFFICE SHOULD MANIPULATE, PROMOTE, OR OTHERWISE INFLUENCE THINKING OF CLIENTS OR POTENTIAL CLIENT TOWARD EITHER SIGN LANGUAGE OR THE ORAL, AURAL/ORAL APPROACH. COUNSELORS ARE TO ASSIST IN PROVIDING APPROPRIATE SUPPORT SYSTEMS, REASONABLY, IN ORDER THAT CLIENTS MIGHT BE GAINFULLY EMPLOYED REALISTICALLY AND PRODUCTIVELY, WITHOUT INTIMIDATION AND PRESSURE. COUNSELORS MUST NOT GIVE INFORMATION FALSELY IN AN EFFORT TO PROMOTE ONE’S OWN WAY OF THINKING. HERE ARE SOME THAT HAVE BEEN USED TO PROMOTE SIGN LANGUAGE:”

- a. Learning sign language will not affect your use of spoken language. That statement must be qualified considerably. Which hearing impaired person will it not affect? Obviously, the “deafened” adult such as Dave Mortensen, Paul Chamberlain, Robert Sanderson, etc...persons who have developed oral language (spoken, written) before losing their hearing and who continue to use their spoken and written language daily in their work will retain that ability. However, most children who are prelingually hearing impaired if they have been educated orally and then learning sign language will lose a great deal of proficiency. Those who attempt to use a mix of sign language and oral language will use pre-dominantly the sign language modality. The phenomenon is demonstrated by research.
- b. To use spoken language is to deny your deafness or to not use sign language is to deny your deafness, or if you don’t sign, you deny your deafness.
- c. Deafness is your heritage.
- d. Speechreading is impossible (“40% look alike sounds on the lips, etc). This is a myth.....some research indicates that hearing impaired person who are visual oral (speechreading) as their primary mode of communicating, will comprehend about 95% of the concepts).
- e. Total communication really includes the oral approach. Such a statement is most commonly used and is not true. In reality don’t make of sign language something it is not and cannot do. It has its place for those who prefer that system of communication, but total communication is a

philosophy not a method. It is a “supermarket” term. Sign language has many limitations. It isolates and segregates, creates dependency rather than functional independence and creates a psychological/emotional conditioning that is resistant to the concept of mainstreaming, etc... (“Mainstreaming denies deafness”).

- f. Sign language appears to have some charismatic affect on hearing people; many hearing people, including interpreters, frequently use it as a vehicle of control rather than a means of assisting the consumer to become functionally independent, or facilitating the sending of accurate messages to the receiver only.

As shown above, Dr. Bitter accused the Utah Association for the Deaf, rehabilitation counselors, namely Gene Stewart, Jim Hilber, Beth Ann Stewart Campbell, for not respecting those options for educational and social programs for the oral deaf population and that there was little demonstrated evidence that they cooperatively work with divergent points of view to preserve the integrity of alternative programs in the State of Utah (Bitter, 1985).

Isn't that ironic the Dr. Bitter was allowed to have control and influence over the University of Utah, Utah School for the Deaf and LDS Deaf Seminary while he felt that UAD should divest itself from any relationship with the UCCD? Little did he realize that it was UAD's idea to form a community center for the deaf and worked hard to make it happen? Why did Dr. Bitter complain about the way UCCD provided services to the oral deaf population when they had a choice in selecting either a “total communication” or “oralist” counselor, as established in 1976 and again in 1978?

Additionally, why couldn't the deaf population have the same recreation opportunities as the hearing population with their local recreation center?

Did You Know?

During a retreat for members of the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind Advisory Council on August 28, 2009, Superintendent Steven Noyce, a former student of Dr. Grant B. Bitter at the University of Utah,

erroneously stated that the Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing tended to focus only on Deaf people using American Sign Language. Marilyn Call, a member of the Advisory Council who happened to be the director of the Sanderson Community Center, clarified that the way he viewed the Sanderson Center sounded like how the old Deaf Center in Bountiful was operated, and that a lot of things had changed over the years. The Sanderson Community Center was now required by the State of Utah to be neutral by providing a wide continuum of services for all deaf and hard of hearing populations.

Dr. Robert G. Sanderson Announces Retirement

Dr. Robert G. Sanderson announced his retirement, effective as of November 15, 1985 after working 37 years of state employment – 20 of them with Division of Rehabilitation (UAD Bulletin, February 1985).

Under Dr. Sanderson's effective leadership, Services to the Deaf had expanded from a one-man operation in 1965 to a large staff located in several Utah cities. When he began with Rehabilitation in 1965, there were approximately eleven deaf people on the rolls and only one fingerspelling counselor to serve them. Due to poor services at the time, deaf people did not want to go to Rehabilitation for help (UAD Bulletin, March 1985).

Dr. Sanderson was instrumental in getting the Utah Deaf community to "talk more." Throughout the Wasatch Front about 500 telephone communication devices were toiling away at about 50-60 words per minute. That was a lot of talk, about 750,000 words an hour. By that time, the Utah



Dr. Robert G. Sanderson

Deaf community couldn't live without the teletype machine and they were grateful that Dr. Sanderson distributed the machines for them to use (UAD Bulletin, February 1985).



**Dr. Judy Ann Buffmire,
Director of Division of
Vocational Rehabilitation
Services**
*The Salt Lake Tribune, August
22, 2011*

were many interpreters available, four counselors were experts in sign language, there was a full time Rehab interpreter, and two full time UAD interpreters (UAD Bulletin, March 1985).

By 1985, over 9,000 people had registered in the guest book at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf! (UAD Bulletin, March 1985).

Upon the retirement of Dr. Robert G. Sanderson, Dr. Judy Ann Buffmire, Executive Director of

Another accomplishment that came to be during Dr. Sanderson's tenure was the establishment of a center for the deaf. The project took over ten years of committee work, meetings, and continued even while he was at Gallaudet College for a year. Due to his persistence, the Utah Community Center for the Deaf was established where the deaf people could meet, work, and enjoy time together (UAD Bulletin, February 1985).

At his retirement in 1985, there were over 300 deaf and hard of hearing people being served. There



Beth Ann Campbell

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services appointed Beth Ann Stewart Campbell as director of the Utah Community Center for the Deaf. She had worked for the Division of Rehabilitation as a professional level interpreter and aide for over 15 years, and was closely associated with the center for the deaf programs. Ms. Campbell, as a CODA, had strong support from the Deaf community. In addition, she reflected her advocacy and activism on behalf of deaf people (Sanderson, 2004).

Beth Ann Campbell assumed the duties and responsibilities as the director of the UCCD in Bountiful, similar to Dr. Sanderson's position before his retirement.

Safety, Maintenance, Population Demographics Issues Demand a Change in Location

Because the Bountiful building was built in 1941 with a two-story addition in 1956, health and safety concerns became an issue. The number of necessary repairs to correct violations of fire, safety, and building codes would be expensive. There was a lack of handicapped accessibility, which was also a code violation. Lastly, the facility continued to deteriorate and it was expensive to cover the maintenance (Sanderson, 2004).

Another issue was population demographics. The Utah Community Center for the Deaf, located in Bountiful, was easily accessible via the 1-15 freeway from Ogden and other Davis County cities, and about 10 to 12 minutes from Salt Lake City. However, the largest population of deaf consumers lived farther south of the Salt Lake area. As a result, a slow decrease in deaf consumer visits became noticeable. Moving the center farther south was not convenient for those who lived in Davis and Weber counties, but the large numbers of deaf consumers in the Salt Lake Valley were significantly in favor of a more central location (Sanderson, 2004).

In 1985, a flurry of letters and memos to the Director of the Division of Facilities Construction & Management from Dr. Buffmire of the Office of Rehabilitation Services, and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Bernarr S. Furse, began. They suggested

that planning funds be directed more to a new community center for the deaf instead of the Bountiful center and its long-term needs for meeting code violations and repairs. They clearly understood that money would not be used effectively by pouring it into the old facility when consumer usage was declining because of its location (Sanderson, 2004).

After the inspection of the Bountiful building, it was recommended in 1987 that a new/newer facility be purchased as soon as possible to serve the deaf and hard of hearing citizens of Utah. It was necessary to bring the center up to health, building, fire, safety and handicapped accessibility codes to make the current center a safe and usable state building. Dr. Judy Ann Buffmire indicated her strong support for deaf citizens and their need for a new Center. Because this building was old and inadequate, lobbying efforts to get a new community center built began (Sanderson, 2004).

An Unexpected Bill Passes During the 1988 Legislative Session

The SB 218 bill, setting up a separate Division of Services to the Hearing Impaired, was passed by the 1988 legislature and signed into law by Governor Norman H. Bangert on March 10 without the knowledge of deaf people. Dave Mortensen, UAD president, expressed his concern about the Utah Deaf community and its leaders not being informed about this bill and asked why they weren't asked for input, for opinions. He emphasized the importance of being involved in anything that pertained to the Utah Deaf community's future socially, economically, and educationally (Mortensen, UAD Bulletin, April 1988; Mortensen, UAD Bulletin, May 1988).

To this particular piece of legislation the title, "Division of Services to the Hearing Impaired" was given. This title did not sit well with the Utah Deaf community. Jim Hilber, a graduate of the University of Utah hearing and speech department and one of the counseling team assembled by Dr. Sanderson over the years, was appointed to the position of administrator over the deaf program. Although he lacked a cultural background in deafness, his education and experience qualified him for the position. It

was during Mr. Hilber’s time and with his active participation that the “Division of Services to the Hearing Impaired” was created. UAD President Mortensen questioned if this SB 218 bill had to do with the deaf in Utah, wouldn’t it have been a proper procedure to involve the deaf themselves or at least let them know. He preferred the word, “Deaf” not “Hearing Impaired”, and asked that the title be changed to “Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing,” which became effective after 1988 (Mortensen, UAD Bulletin, April 1988).

Conversely, The Utah Association for the Deaf board went on record as not in support of Mr. Hilber as the person in charge of the Division of Services to the Hearing Impaired. While the Utah Deaf community was fuming with anger for not being included



Members of the Utah Deaf community at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf in Bountiful, Utah, 1988. Top Row: Pete Green, Jerry Wesrbery, Art Valdez, Ilene Kinner, Ken Kinner, Shanna Mortensen, David Mortensen, Clara Kendall. Bottom Row: (L-R): Sally Green, Donna Lee Westberg, Kay Curtis, Donna Mae Deyarmon, and Carol Wilson

in the SB 218 bill input, the recent protest in early 1988 and demands pushing for the selection of a deaf university president at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. inspired them to take control of their destiny (Mortensen, UAD Bulletin, April 1988).

Gary Olsen, executive director of the National Association of the Deaf, stated that the “Deaf President Now” protest at Gallaudet University served as an example to everyone that “deaf people want to control their own destiny.” In addition to this, the deposed hearing person, Dr. Elisabeth Zinser, said, “What is happening across the country is a civil rights time of the Deaf community.” UAD President Mortensen felt

those words were well spoken and said that the deaf in Utah will want and demand more say in events and laws that affect their way of life (Mortensen, UAD Bulletin, April 1988).

On March 31, 1988 Dr. Judy Buffmire, Executive Director of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in Utah, invited the Utah Deaf community and its leaders to the Utah State Office of Education to express opinions, ideas and proposals on the new SB 218 bill. Approximately 100 deaf people were in attendance. Many of them stood up to speak about what their feelings were. In the end they received a response that the position of director of Division of Services to the Hearing Impaired/Deaf would be opened for nationwide recruitment (Mortensen, UAD Bulletin, May 1988). It was a small victory.

UAD President Mortensen posted his President's Message in the UAD Bulletin, May 1988, as follows:

“Historically speaking, for the past 75 years or more, programs for the deaf have always been proposed, developed, and administered by hearing people. There is only one exception that can be thought of when Dr. Robert G. Sanderson was placed in Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and remained for several years, leading deaf people and developing a variety of programs to serve them. Unfortunately, when he retired, he was not replaced by a deaf person. He was replaced by a hearing person. We feel there has been a deterioration or breaking up of some of these services that were of benefit to the Deaf community the past 4 years.

We believe it is time now to allow deaf people to have more say in matters that affect the quality of their life. We believe it is time now to select qualified deaf people to run programs or divisions. We are fast approaching the 21st century. We must control our destiny. We want to show you that we are no longer going to sit idly by and allow hearing people who do not understand us or our needs to continue to wreak our future.

Our educational needs suffered in the hands of hearing people who thought they were doing the best for us without even asking us (the consumer: the product: the result) what would have been a better way to give us an education that we could be proud of.

We are at a point where we must say that we need more control over the Division of Services to the Hearing Impaired/Deaf. We are asking once again that people in position of power ask us, the deaf, what we want. And when given an answer, follow through with it.

We need clarification on the meaning of hearing impaired and deaf.

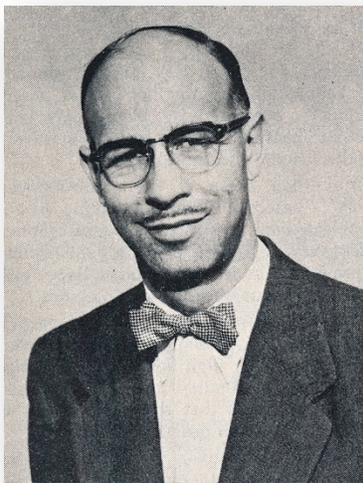
For 75 years plus, educational and rehabilitation officials who could hear invested money into programs to try and improve and educate the deaf while making sure that none of the deaf who were in their programs would ever rise above their own positions. Now we, the deaf, want to prove that part of their investments were worthwhile to a degree by choosing a deaf person to run the Division of Services to the Hearing Impaired/Deaf” (Mortensen, UAD Bulletin, May 1988, p. 2).

Did You Know?

The Deaf community view the label “hearing impaired” as negative and offensive. It implies something broken that needs to be fixed. The terms, “deaf and hard of hearing” are politically correct.

Deaf Vent Frustrations and Criticize the New Division

In the Utah State Board of Education room it was standing room only, with members of the Utah Deaf community in attendance. They lobbied closely with the board



Rodney W. Walker
The Utah Eagle, April 1955

members for two hours. The Utah Deaf community expressed their concerns and feelings about short-and-long term plans for the “Division of Services to the Hearing Impaired.” Several Deaf members spoke up. UAD President Mortensen said, “We must control our own destiny. We are no longer willing to sit idly by and watch hearing people wreck our programs and control our future” (Campbell, Deseret News, April 1988).

Rodney Walker, the local Gallaudet alumni association president stated, “They have been oppressed by hearing people and they

[Deaf community] were pushed down.” “Our feelings are the same as students at Gallaudet University” (Campbell, Deseret News, April 1988).

Lloyd Perkins said, “Deafness had been treated like AIDS in Utah – a disease to run away from.” He also said, “The deaf in Utah in their own system have not been trained either in the school (for the deaf) or rehabilitation to be leaders.” Perkins quoted a statement made during the Gallaudet protest, “When the hearing believe they have to take care of the deaf, this is outright hatred, prejudice, and discrimination and a grand display of ignorance” (Campbell, Deseret News, April 1988).

Dr. Sanderson, a former director of deaf services with the State Office of Education said, “The new division is a step in the right direction but criticized the Office of Rehabilitation for not seeking comment from the Utah Deaf community before introducing the measure in the Legislature.” He emphasized saying, “I would strongly recommend that a trained, experienced deaf professional person be appointed to head the division. The reason for this is a deaf person with deep understanding will recognize the needs of deaf people and their culture” (Campbell, Deseret News, April 1988).



Lloyd H. Perkins

Lastly, Jim Harper of Provo said, “The deaf of the state feel as if hearing people are their puppeteers. The deaf may have a hearing loss, but they do not have a mental loss” (Campbell, Deseret News, April 1988). After the Deaf community, particularly UAD President Mortensen speaking up, it was agreed to change to new Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) and this division was housed at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf.

First Division Director Appointed for Utah Community Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The position was opened after the resignation of Jim Hilber during 1988 when he took the job as the Division of Rehabilitation Services Facilities Specialist. After the Utah protest, the position was changed from “director” to “specialist” and had been held by



Jim Harper

Mr. Hilber since then. He was very supportive of a new community center of the deaf and played a huge role for years in working with the legislators, analysts, Division of Facilities Construction and Management and others. His relationship with the Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities played

a big part in the success of the legislative funding for the center for the deaf. Marilyn Call, a hard of hearing individual was the Executive Director of the Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities at that time and became acquainted with Jim Hilber, Gene Stewart and Deaf advocates (Sanderson, 2004).

Utah Association for the Deaf and the Utah Deaf community strongly felt that the director be a deaf person. UAD President Mortensen stated in his September 1988 UAD Bulletin: The President’s Messages, as follows:

“Will the director be a deaf person, which is most logical and wise to install as the head of this new Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing?” If a hearing person is selected, no matter what his skills and qualifications are in the field of deafness, or understanding the psychology of deafness, Utah will still be behind the times. It will be a backwards step to name a director who has hearing to lead the deaf into new fields of advancement” (Mortensen, UAD Bulletin, September 1988, p. 2).

In September 1988, a deaf person was selected as the new division director, but to the surprise of everyone, and for personal reasons, he turned down the job. Dr. Judy Buffmire and the screening committee could not select one of the applicants because the rest of the applicants had already received a letter letting them know the job was given to someone else or they would violate the Equal Employment Laws if they are doing it (Mortensen, UAD Bulletin, September 1988).

After consulting with representatives of the Deaf community, Dr. Buffmire appointed Gene Stewart, a hearing Vocational Rehabilitation counselor, as Acting Division Director of the new Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) (Mortensen, UAD Bulletin, October 1988).

In late spring of 1989, Kenneth C. Burdett of Ogden initiated a petition to support Gene Stewart as permanent director of the DSDHH; it was signed by over 50 deaf people and given to Dr. Judy Buffmire (Nelson, UAD Bulletin, October 1989; Darlene Stewart Cochran, interview with her brother, Gene Stewart, April 4, 2012).

At the Utah Association for the Deaf convention in June 1989, a resolution calling for support of Gene Stewart as a permanent division director of the DSDHH was written by Kenneth C. Burdett and passed by the deaf members attending (Nelson, UAD Bulletin, October 1989; Darlene Stewart Cochran, interview with her brother, Gene Stewart, April 4, 2012).



Gene Stewart

On August 11, 1989, the Utah State Board of Education officially appointed Gene Stewart as Division Director of the Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, where he had served for nearly a year as acting administrator. He became the first Division Director of the Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Nelson, UAD Bulletin, October 1989). When the DSDHH was housed at the Utah Community Center for the Deaf in 1988, services to the deaf grew. The administration divided responsibilities between the Division Director and the Director. Under Mr.

Stewart's administration, Beth Ann Stewart Campbell's title/role as the director remained the same and she reported him.



Kenneth C. Burdett

Mr. Stewart had served as a rehabilitation counselor since 1967, when he was hired by the Utah Division of Rehabilitation Services to provide vocational rehabilitation to the deaf. Like Beth Ann Stewart Campbell, he was also a CODA; his parents were Wayne and Georgia (Mae) Stewart. He grew up in the Deaf community as the only hearing child in a home with two deaf siblings, Keith and Darlene (Cochran). Mr. Stewart earned a professional

level interpreters certificate. His education included a bachelor's degree with a major in speech pathology and minor in German from the University of Utah, and a master's degree in the education administration for the deaf from California State University at Northridge. His appointment was widely supported by the Deaf community. His primary goal was to establish a new Utah Community Center for the Deaf (Sanderson, 2004).

Working on Getting a New Community Center for the Deaf Building in Another Location

On June 16, 1989, at the biennial convention of the Utah Association for the Deaf, Dr. Judy Ann Buffmire, Executive Director of the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation,

told the audience, “planning dollars had been obtained from the legislature for a new center for the deaf after four years of constant lobbying and pushing” (Sanderson, 2004).

Dr. Sanderson reported that with planning funds secured, an Ad Hoc Planning Committee for the new Utah Community Center for the Deaf was formed, and met for the first time on July 5, 1989. Several deaf and hard of hearing individuals joined this committee along with architects and staff of the Utah State Division of Facilities Construction and Management. Deaf members were Shirley Platt, Lee Shepherd, John Peebler, Norman Williams, Lloyd Perkins, Keith Lauritzen, Don Jensen, Dave Mortensen, Robert Sanderson, and Robert Gillespie (Sanderson, 2004).

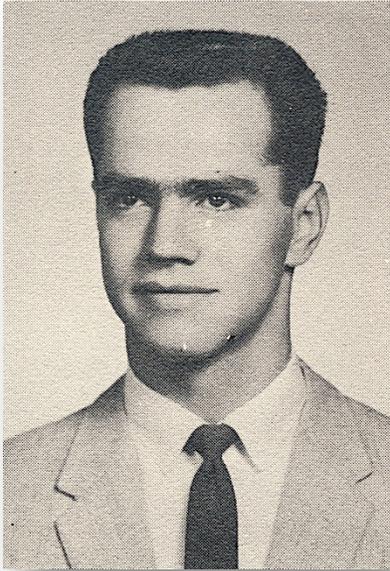
The Ad Hoc Planning Committee gathered to discuss a broad range of concerns. They discussed the budget for the purchase of land, size of the land, size of the building (square footage) and construction, what to include in the building, how many people it would accommodate, and numerous other details (Sanderson, 2004).

The building priorities were for good lighting throughout the building, fire alarms for the deaf, as well as other safety precautions for the deaf. A baseball diamond would serve as an enticement to bring young deaf to the Utah Community Center for the Deaf. In addition, the availability of a basketball court/gym with a stage would be helpful for the young deaf to utilize. It was a goal that basketball and baseball be provided as a means for strong community support. Sports have always been important in the Deaf community. Nationally, deaf students enjoyed participating in competitive sports with other deaf students, similar to the hearing peers at public schools. The local Deaf community, who were USD alumni, wished to see mainstreamed students share the same opportunity at the center (Sanderson, 2004).



Shirley Platt, a member of the Ad Hoc Planning Committee

In order to prepare for the architect's sketch of proposed building plans, Norman Williams visited various buildings that had a gym. Much to his dismay, he couldn't locate a satisfactory one. So he visited the Idaho School for the Deaf that had a new full size basketball court with bleachers. He took satisfaction in the size of that gym and requested that the center copy the school's size of the gym. As a result, the gymnasium was designed to house a basketball court with moveable bleachers! (Kenneth L. Kinner, personal communication, 2008; Norman Williams, personal communication, May 8, 2012).



Norman Williams, a member of the Ad Hoc Planning Committee

On September 20, 1989, Dr. Buffmire appointed seven new members to the State Advisory Committee for Services. The purpose of this committee was to serve in an advisory capacity for a term of three years. Various representatives from the Utah community were served. Mr. Mortensen was one of the members representing the deaf (Sanderson, 2004).

In September 1989, Mr. Stewart responded UAD President Mortensen's request to explain what the new Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing would do, and who the people were in the organization. Mr. Stewart worked hard serving the Deaf community as an ally. When he started his position in October 1988, he



Lee Shepherd, a member of the Ad Hoc Planning Committee

told himself, “The deaf must be involved and be kept informed.” He did that through the

UAD Bulletin, the Deaf Services Advisory Committee, and attendance at the UAD Board meetings, as well as through individual conversations (Sanderson, 2004).



Robert Gillespie, a member of the Ad Hoc Planning Committee

Did You Know?

While the Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was searching for a new director, Mabel Bell, a columnist for the October 1989 UAD Bulletin (known as Ron Nelson) wrote, as follows:

“Let me ask you a question. Can hearing people make the best possible decisions for the Deaf community without any feedback or representation from them? Up until very recently, every program set up by legislators or state agencies that affected the Deaf community were administered and staffed entirely by hearing people. Is this fair representation?

...It is long past time that Gallaudet had a deaf president, as testimony that deaf people are capable of leading themselves.

...Why aren't [State Board of Education, Voc Rehab, etc] selecting qualified deaf people to be administrators in those programs directly affecting the Deaf community of Utah?

...Deafness should not be the only criteria for the job, but if the deaf applying is an active member of the Deaf community, the deaf applicant has something that no hearing person will ever be able to develop – an intimate understanding of deafness and its culture.”



Donald Jensen, a member of the Ad Hoc Planning Committee

In October 1989 UAD Bulletin, Ron Nelson explained that “I think Dr. Judy Buffmire did not ignore the Deaf community. At first, the Deaf community strongly supported the concept of having a deaf director and a deaf person was selected. Several months later, the Deaf community changed their minds and decided they wanted a hearing person as director. Several other deaf groups related to deafness also supported the concept of a hearing person as director, including the DSDHH Advisory Council. A hearing person was selected as the new director.”



Ron Nelson

Ron also said, “If the Deaf community had remained steadfast in their support of the concept of a deaf person as the director, would events have been any different? We will never know (Nelson, UAD Bulletin, October 1989).

Utah State Board of Education Gives the New Utah Community Center for the Deaf #1 Facility Priority

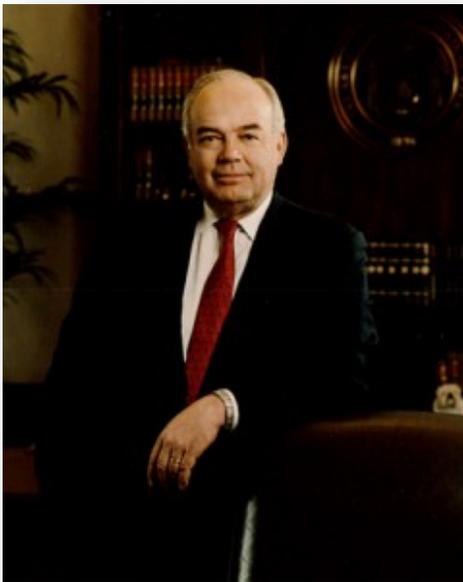
In January 1989, Mr. Stewart, Division Director of the Division for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, along with UAD officers, Dave Mortensen and Lloyd Perkins urged the Utah Deaf community to assist them with their lobbying efforts to get a new community center for the deaf building in another location. They encouraged the Utah Deaf community to write letters to their local senator and representative (Sanderson, 2004).

On September 8, 1989, the Utah State Board of Education gave the new Utah Community Center for the Deaf building #1 facility priority. With their support the Utah

Deaf community would be more able to convince the 1990 Legislature to award building funds to the Division. UAD officers were in high spirits. They were one step closer to building a new community center of the deaf where they could meet to grow and learn in the most populated area (UAD Bulletin, September 1989).

On October 1, 1989, plans for the proposed building were completed by the architects, Frandsen-Chamberlain of Ogden, Utah. The document detailed an executive summary of the project, amounting in effect to a building request. Among other things in the project floor plan was a full size basketball court fronting a large stage – or, in other words, a multi-use auditorium. According to Dr. Sanderson, “Part of the justification of the new center was the estimated cost of maintaining the old Bountiful Center, pointing

out that it was fiscally unwise to authorize funds for maintenance and meeting code compliance on an old building with a projected limited lifetime” (Sanderson, 2004).



Utah Governor Norman H. Bangert
Source: Wikipedia

The State of Utah began to comprehend the impact of deafness. They recognized that deaf people were under educated, under employed, under represented and socially isolated, all of which had a negative financial impact on the individual and the community. To address these issues, the Utah State

Office of Rehabilitation, Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing developed and implemented specialized services to reduce dependence on tax dollars and increase independence and production of deaf adults. The services included interpreter referral assistance, youth support, counseling, socialization and independent living. The state recognized these unique services were most effectively delivered through a specialized rehabilitation facility. The programs offered at the current facility had a significantly

positive impact on the Utah Deaf community. They agreed that providing quality services in the current facility had barriers because of problems with the building and its location. Thus, the Utah Deaf community was delighted to learn that the Governor Norman H. Bangerter supported them!